

PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION REPORT



SUSPECT INSURGENCY
SAYABOURY PROVINCE
LAOS

Declass Review by NIMA/DOD

NPIC/R-81/69
SEPTEMBER 1969

GROUP 1: EXCLUDED FROM
AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING
AND DECLASSIFICATION

WARNING

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ABSTRACT

This report provides a photographic study of insurgent activity in northern Sayaboury Province, Laos. The report is divided into an introduction and four sections which correspond to the areas of most active insurgency (i.e. the westernmost parts of the province). Each of these sections contains a large-scale map which delineates all insurgent as well as friendly areas and the major trail network. Applicable text and annotated photographs are included in each section.

Sixteen suspect insurgent items were identified outside of the four areas. While these are not described individually, they are shown on Figure 1.

INTRODUCTION

The frequency of reports of enemy activity within Northern Sayaboury Province and in the neighboring Thai provinces of Chiang Rai and Nan has increased. In addition to conducting insurgent activities within the province, the enemy is reported to be utilizing a trail network through the province to support operations to the south and west.

25X1A [REDACTED] photography of [REDACTED] provided complete coverage of 25X1D northern Sayaboury Province except for the extreme northwestern tip (Figure 1). Ninety-one items of suspect insurgent activity have been identified within the area. Because of the relatively small scale, analysis is subject to revision or refinement when larger scale photography becomes available. However, the signatures that are identified conform to those of known insurgent activity in Cambodia, South Vietnam, and the Laotian Panhandle.

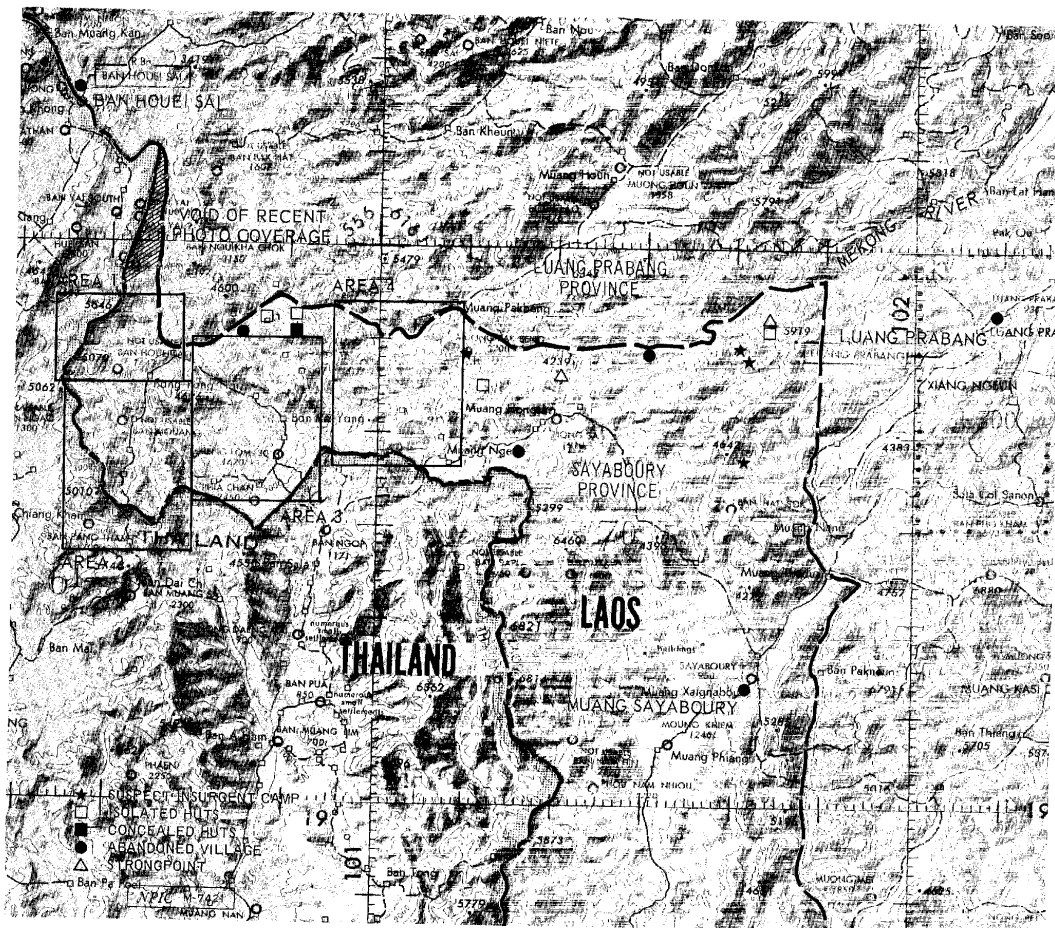


FIGURE 1. GENERAL LOCATION MAP. NORTHERN SAYABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

AREA 1

Area 1 (9.5 x 14 nautical miles (nm)) is situated on the Lao/Thai border and includes portions of the westernmost part of Sayaboury Province in Laos and northeastern Chiang Rai Province in Thailand (Fig 2). Thirteen significant items, in two concentrations, have been identified and are described herein. Of the thirteen items, eleven are in Laos within 2 nm of the border, and two are immediately across the border in Thailand.

The first concentration is highlighted by one razed village at PB 574391. Three abandoned villages are observed at PB 595977, PB 574940, and PB 572946. Some of these huts are only in an early stage of deterioration, indicating that the villages were probably only recently vacated.

The only obvious military signature in this first concentration is three groups of probable foxholes, located on a hill at PB 579977, PB 582975, and PB 583976 (Figure 3). This area of concentration is relatively devoid of vegetation and is therefore readily accessible to the border.

Two suspect insurgent camps are also observed. The first, located at PB 564966, consists of at least three possible huts; the second, located at PB 558959, consists of at least five huts. Both camps are served by a trail extending along the border.

An Intelligence Information Report¹ estimating the enemy order of battle for Laos as of 15 April 1969, reports one Pathet Lao company at PB 5998, a point 1600 yards from the vicinity of the probable foxholes. This company is further reported to be part of a 375-man unidentified battalion, possibly Meo with North Vietnamese advisors, headquartered at Q B 2398 (See area 4).

The second concentration of activity consists of three clusters of partially concealed huts, another cluster of ten isolated huts, and two villages of which one is partially abandoned with the other one having been razed.

The three clusters of partially concealed huts, located at PB 527899, PB 527880, and PB 510878, consist of at least 13, 16, and 7 huts respectively. Although extensive agricultural activity is observed, [REDACTED] 25X1B
characteristic of villages in the area.

The ten isolated huts at PB 487853 are located in an area of thin tree canopy. Although they appear to be in good condition, the lack of activity around them indicates only light usage.

The two villages, just across the border in Thailand, also indicate suspect insurgent activity. The village of Ban Lao U, located at PB 489884, has been partially abandoned with only four huts still intact. The second village, Ban Lao Lu Bo Ka located at PB 509896, has been completely razed. However, [REDACTED] through the former village site. An Intelligence Information Report of 7 April 1969 stated that the villages of Ban Lao U and Ban Lao Yee (unlocated) were vacated and that Communist terrorist-led Meos from Laos maintained the agricultural fields.² 25X1B

AREA 2

Area 2 (14 x 19 nm) straddles the Lao/Thai border and includes a portion of westernmost Sayaboury Province in Laos and portions of adjacent Chiang Rai and Nan provinces in Thailand (Figure 4).

Ban Muong, an active STOL site with its associated strongpoints, is located at PB 6076 and comprises the largest friendly stronghold within this area.

Seventeen significant items were observed in the area. Except for a possible fortified strongpoint in Thailand at PB 690576, all items are located in Laos and consist of abandoned or partially abandoned villages, razed villages, suspect insurgent areas and camps, isolated huts, and concealed huts.

Two suspect insurgent camps are located on hillsides 1000 yards apart at PB 660824 and PB 650818; each consists of five partially concealed huts.

A suspect insurgent area, located on a ridgeline at PB 559709, consists of at least four [REDACTED]

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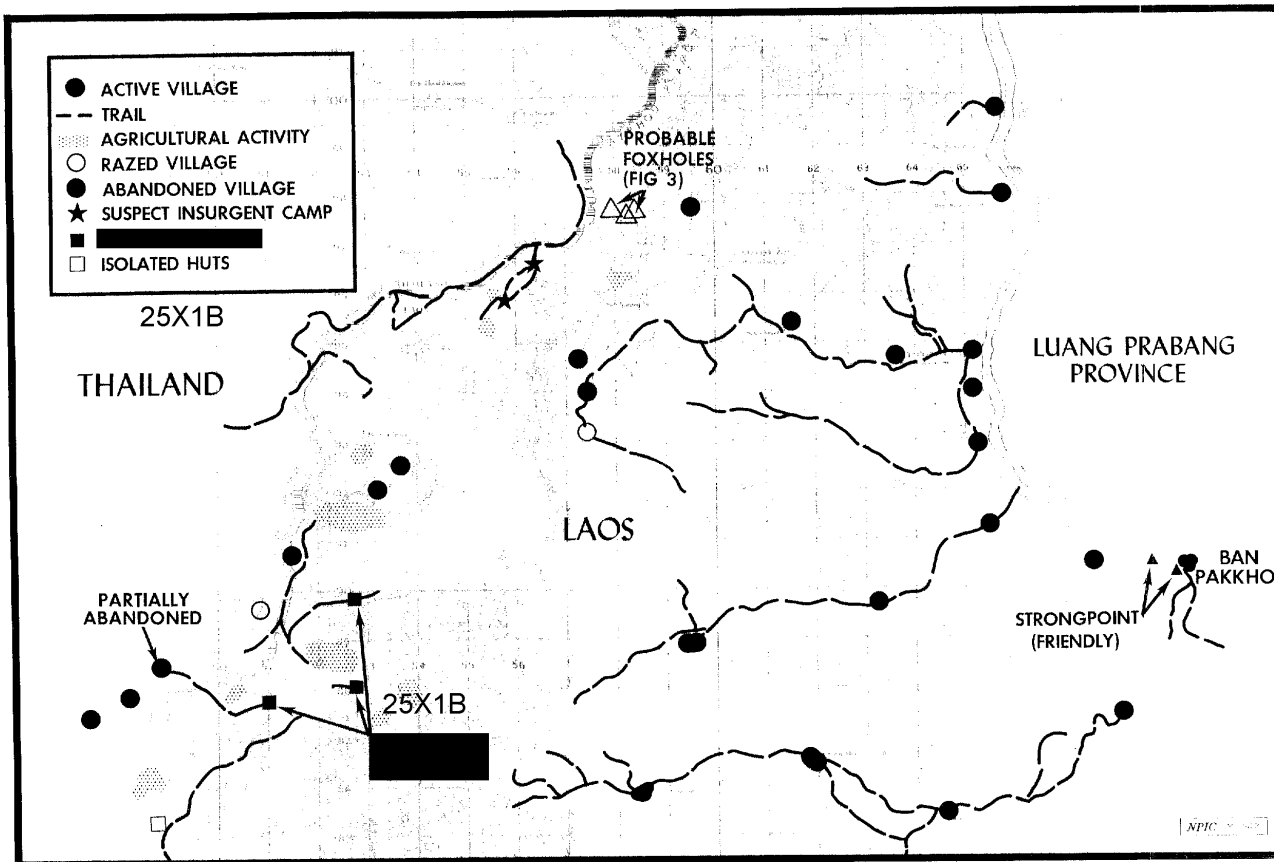


FIGURE 2. AREA 1, SAYABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

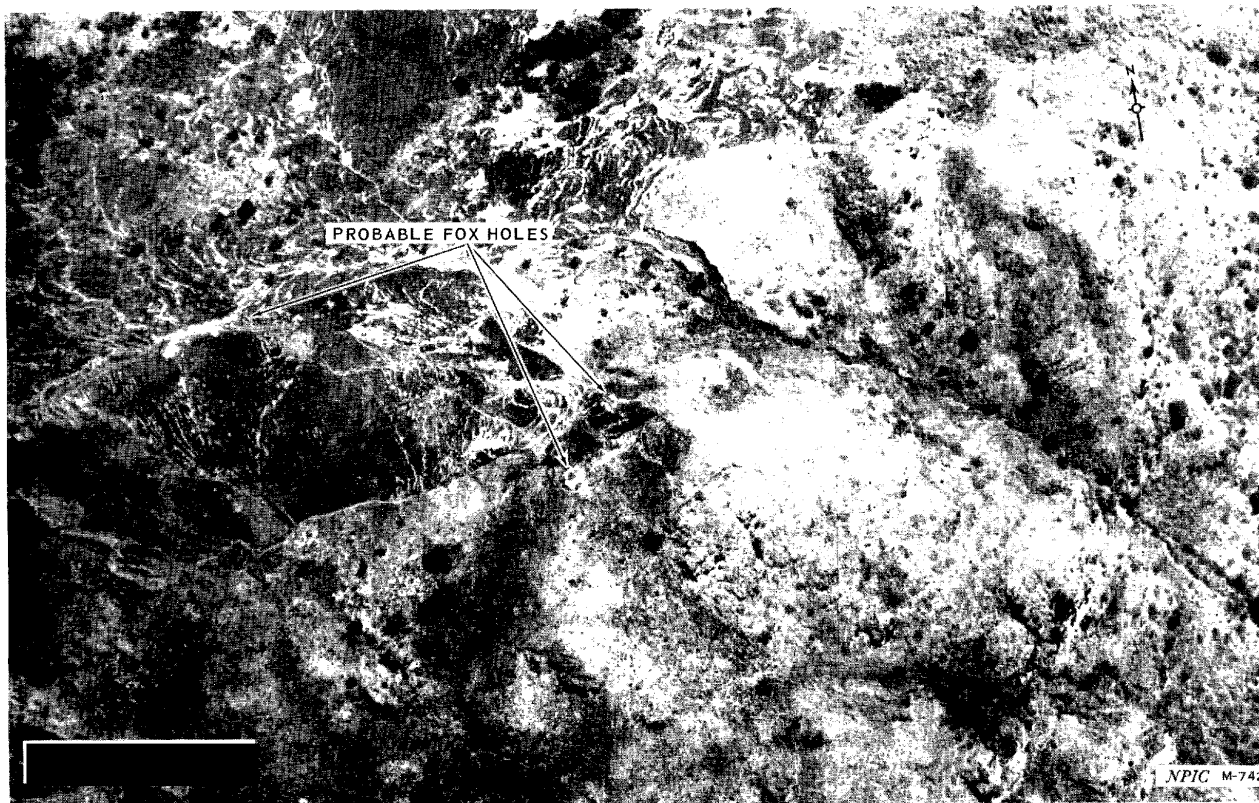


FIGURE 3. PROBABLE DEFENSE POSITIONS, SAYABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

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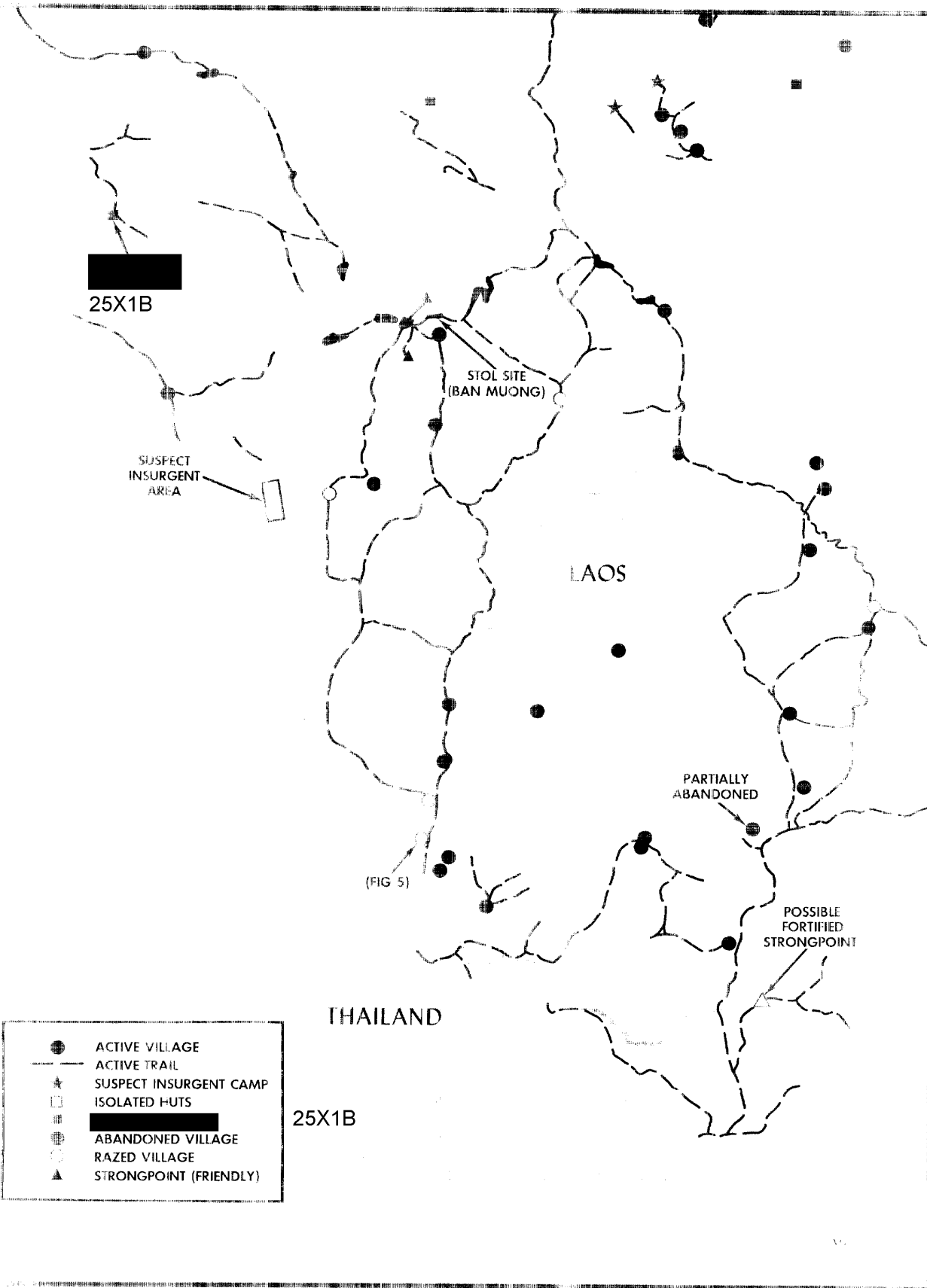


FIGURE 4. AREA X, SAVABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

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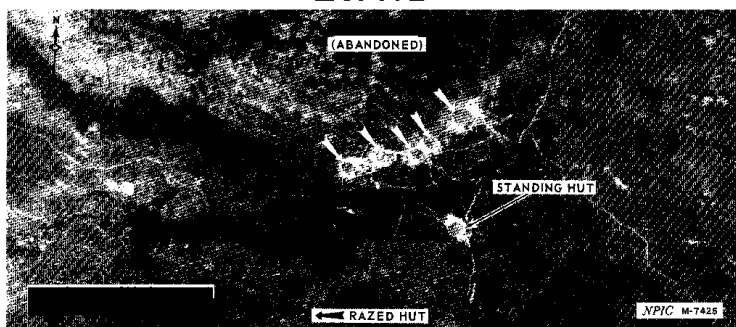
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FIGURE 5. COMPARATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY OF RAZED VILLAGE, SAYABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

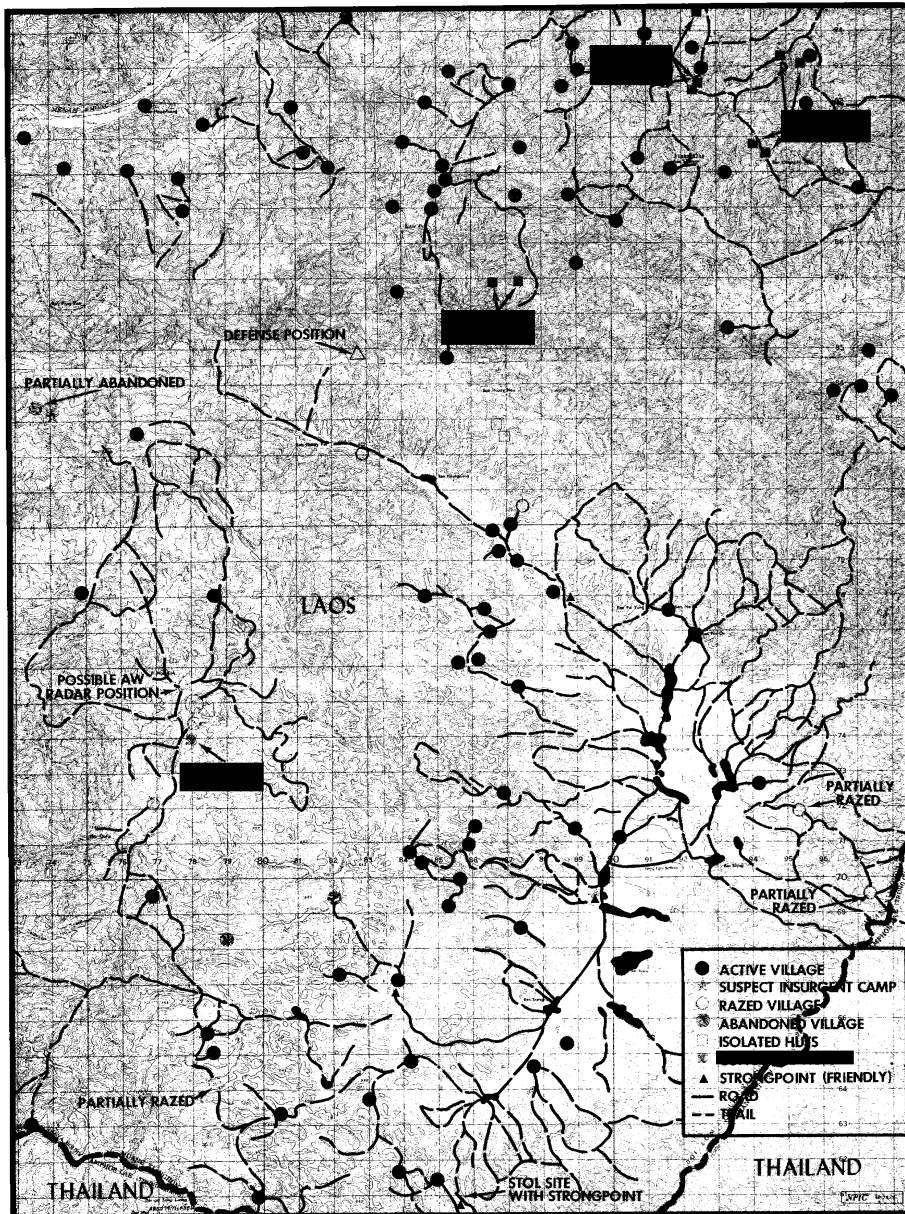
Four abandoned, one partially abandoned, and five razed villages are annotated on Figure 4. The most significant abandoned village is in a stream valley at PB 674842. Although the village area is completely overgrown and no trail is visible, all 17 huts appear to be in good condition. The [REDACTED] photograph of a village at PB 600620 (Figure 5) shows that the village was razed [REDACTED]. Twelve isolated huts are located at PB 698825 and seven [REDACTED] are located at PB 601819. Whereas the area of the isolated huts is devoid of activity, the [REDACTED] are within a large and probably indigenous agricultural area.

The aforementioned Intelligence Information Report¹ also reports a Pathet Lao company, located 2.8 nm SSE of this suspect insurgent area, in the vicinity of PB 5987. This company is reported to be part of the 375-man battalion positioned at QB 2389 (See Area 4).

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AREA 3

Area 3 (14 x 19 nm) extends from the Mekong River, south to the Lao/Thai border (Fig 6) and includes a friendly stronghold in the Xieng Lom area, as well as 32 significant intelligence items, of which 29 are depicted.

Except for two partially razed villages southwest of Xieng Lom, these suspect insurgent signatures form a generally NNE/SSW alignment, skirting the stronghold to the west. Within 7 nm of the border, the 30 remaining signatures fall along an extensive trail network which connects with signatures in adjacent area 2.

The 30 identified signatures include one suspect insurgent camp at PB 741832; consisting of at least four huts, eleven clusters of partially concealed huts (PB 780739, PN 940908, PB 944905, PB 954931, PB 948933, PB 923946, PB 930949, PN 923923, PN 925925, PB 873869, and PB 866869) totaling 69 huts; four locations of isolated huts (PB 867828, PB 869825, PB 923981, and PB 857980) totaling 24 huts; one defensive position (PB 828848); one possible AW radar position (PB 778755); one partially abandoned and four abandoned villages; and one partially razed and six razed villages.

The Intelligence Information Report¹ also locates a Pathet Lao company 5 nm inside the border in the vicinity of PB 7870. This company is also reported to be part of the 375-man battalion headquartered at QB 2398 (See Area 4).

FIGURE 6. AREA 3, SAYABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

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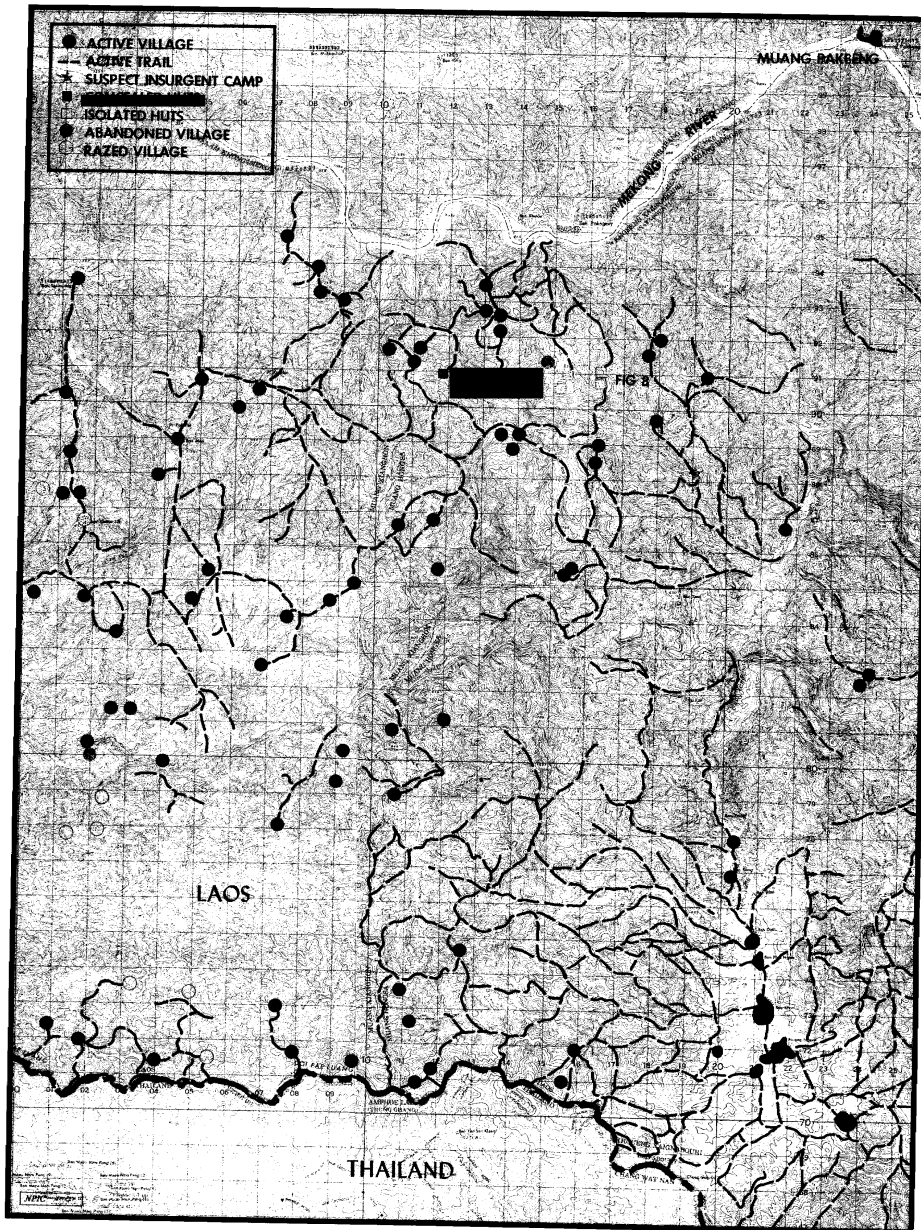


FIGURE 7. AREA 4, SAYABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

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AREA 4

Area 4 (14 x 19 nm) includes the area from the Mekong River, south to the Lao/Thai border (Fig 7). Sixteen significant intelligence items were identified within two concentrations.

The first concentration of activity is located immediately south of the river and consists of one suspect insurgent camp, one cluster of [REDACTED] huts, four groups of isolated huts, and one abandoned village. The suspect insurgent camp, located in a stream valley at QB 191883, contains at least 14 partial-

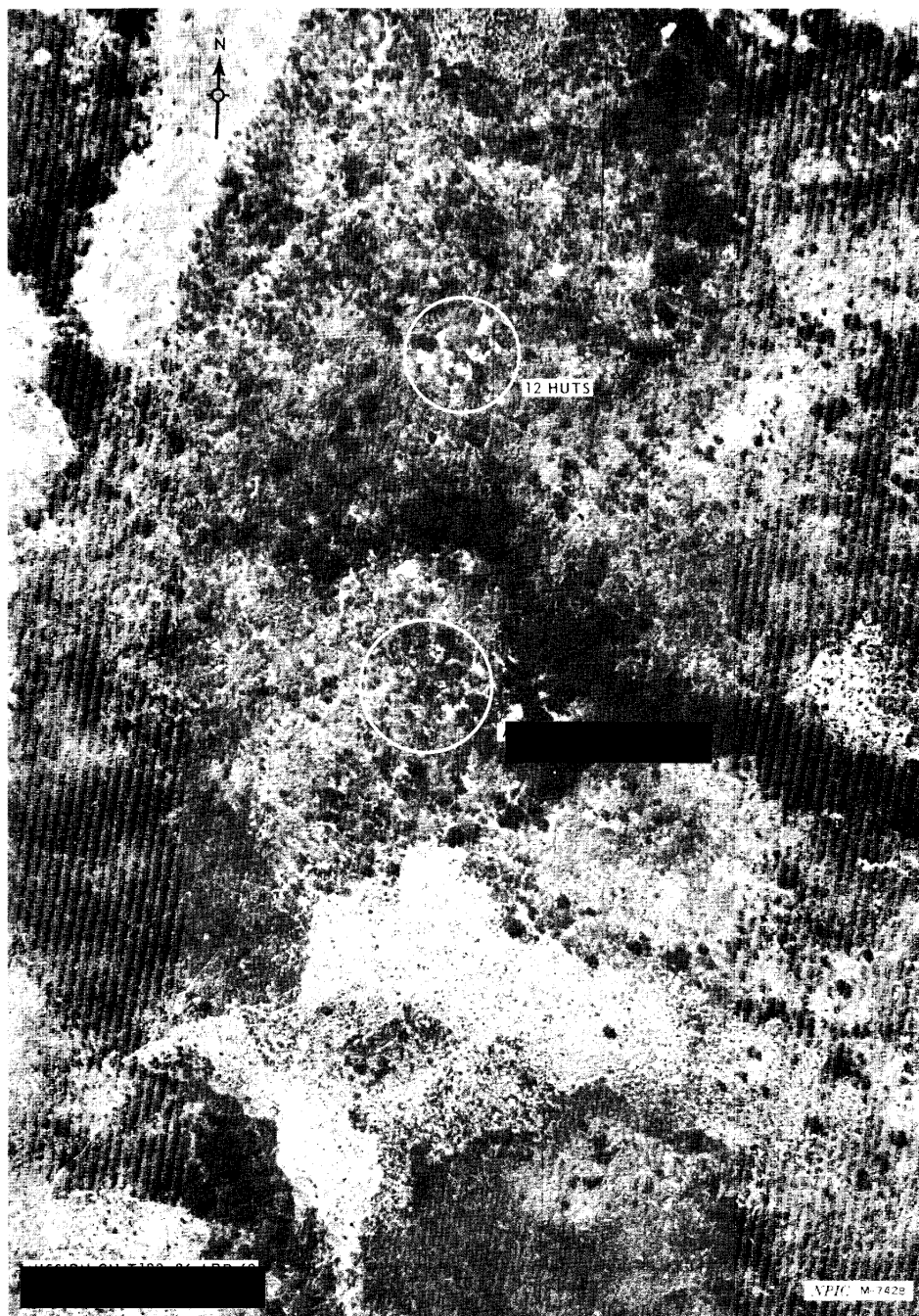
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[REDACTED] is located on a hillside at QB 119910 (Figure 8). The four groups of isolated huts, located at QB 154910, QB 152906, QB 164910 and QB 164908, contain a total of 20 huts. One of these groups is also shown on Figure 8.

The Intelligence Information Report¹ also locates a Pathet Lao company 6 nm inside the border in the vicinity of QB 1382. This company is also reported to be part of the 375-man battalion headquartered in the vicinity of QB 2389 immediately south of Muang Pakbeng (See Map).

The second concentration of activity forms a 9 nm north/south alignment on the west side of the area and consists of one abandoned village and eight razed villages. No other signatures are observed in this area.



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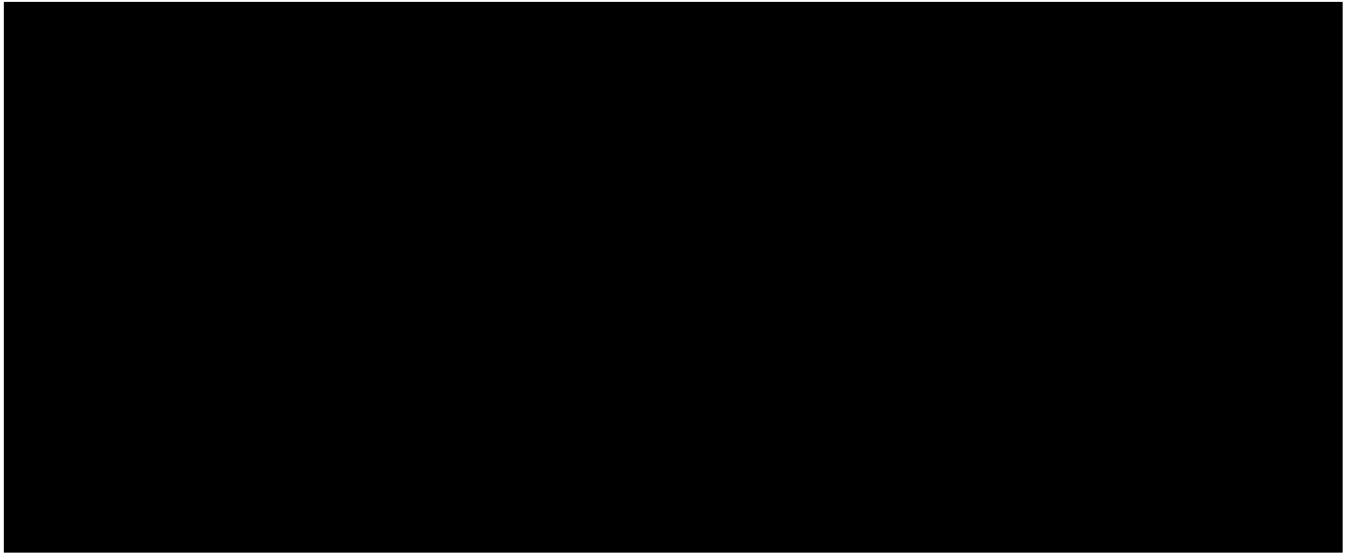
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FIGURE 8. ISOLATED HUTS, SAYABOURY PROVINCE, LAOS

REFERENCES

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MAPS OR CHARTS

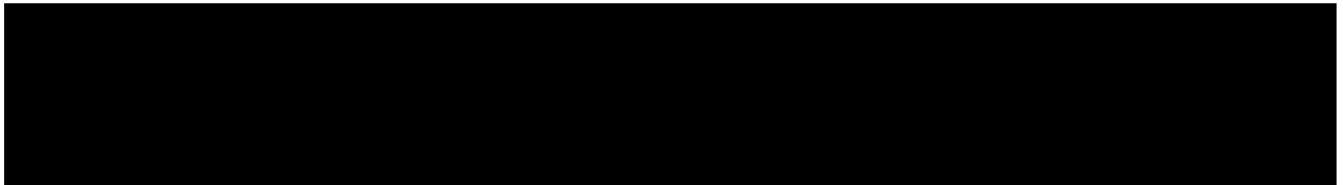
AMS series L708, sheets 5069 I, II, 1st ed, 5070 I, II, 1st ed, and 5169 III, 1st ed, scale 1:50,000 (Unclassified)

AMS series L7015, sheets 5148 I, II, III, 1st ed, 5148 IV, 2nd ed, and 5248 III, IV, 1st ed, scale 1:50,000 (Unclassified)

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DOCUMENTS



REQUIREMENT

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NPIC Project 174002AA

*Latest available coverage as of 2 Sep 69.

